

# OFFER BIG HOLIDAY BARGAINS

Inspect Our Christmas Stock Before Purchasing Elsewhere

## Religion Based Upon Gratitude

"He that urges gratitude pleads the cause of both God and men, for without it we can neither be sociable nor religious," says the pagan philosopher, Seneca. Thanksgiving, then, if this be true, is not an act of worship, but an influence for social advancement. Gratitude is said to be the rarest of virtues, yet it exists, and it runs like a golden chain throughout society, binding men together. Nor is it as rare as we are likely, from experience and observation to think it is. False gratitude may be eloquent but it is not easy to express real gratitude in words. "No metaphysician ever felt the deficiency of language so much as the grateful," and through that deficiency gratitude is often dumb. Neither is conduct a true test, for circumstances may deny the opportunity of its expression, or conflicting circumstances may prevent its expression when opportunity arises. There is much gratitude in the world, between men and men, for which evidence is lacking, yet there is probably no man who cannot recall a feeling of gratefulness within himself which he never voiced and for favors which he never requited. Knowing more of our own thoughts and feelings than we do of those of others we are likely to think the quality of gratitude is our peculiar possession, and cynically to agree with Rochefoucauld that "gratitude in the generality of men is only a strong and secret wish to receive still greater benefits." Undoubtedly there is much on the surface to justify that view, but while the quality of real gratitude may vary considerably in its strength there are few if any who are wholly lacking, and the meager consciousness of it makes it a potent force in the social advancement of man. Whether thanksgiving be expressed or withheld it is an influence for betterment within every one of us, for the feeling toward others is the test of our souls.

But if that is true as between men, it is more true, and a much more potent influence, between men and God. The sense of gratitude is the measure of devotion. If it is a mere utterance of the lips it has no meaning, no matter how eloquently worded, reasons a writer in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. If it does not come from the heart it is a mockery, and the deeper its feeling, even though it be dumb, the closer it brings one to its divine objective. No pean of praise can reach one-half so high as the thankful thought, which in itself is a prayer. It is more than an acknowledgment of spirit, an uplifting of the invisible self into contact with its source, with a consequent enrichment of new strength and new courage. Gratitude, as the old pagan said, is essential to religion. There is no religion where there is no gratitude. And the power of religion is in exact proportion to the sense of thankfulness it inspires. That does not mean that God is a great almsgiver, who dispenses charity for the reward of appreciation. He gives because he is God, and giving is the expression of his unaltered goodness. He gives freely regardless of thanks. He cannot be bribed to larger favors by gratitude. The effect of gratitude is upon ourselves, in the exercise of our souls and in the approach to deity through that exercise, which is the essential essence of religion.

And that effect may be collective as well as individual. We are today a nation engaged in thanksgiving. We are, in totality, a hundred million souls expressing gratitude to Him for His blessings to us as a people. If that is a mere formality it is nothing—it is worse than nothing. We may be quite sure that God does not delight in rhetoric that is but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. We may be equally sure that we as a nation are not advanced or uplifted by sermons or prayers or speeches that, however beautifully attired, are but words. But if that thankfulness is real, if it is felt within, if we are conscious of it, if its expression comes from the heart, then is the soul of the nation raised up thereby, and given a larger vision, an increase of power, a nearer approach to the glory of divinity, by the exercise of the spirit within us, reaching out to clasp hands with its creator and the source of all its strength.

And manifestly there is abundant reason for that gratitude and its expression. We need not, we cannot, "count our blessings one by one," as the song entreats us to do. They are too many for counting, too overwhelming for measurement. We who but a short century ago were relatively insignificant now stand at the forefront of the nations of the earth, admittedly supreme in its leadership. We are self-contained, self-controlled, prosperous above all other peoples. We find ourselves, in this year of His grace, directing, in a very large measure, the destinies of the peoples of the earth, and for this great privilege we are thankful.

### Boulevard to Redondo Now Being Repaired

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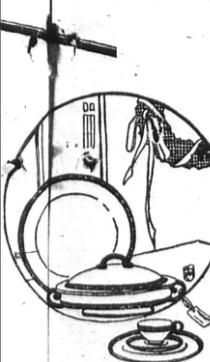
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